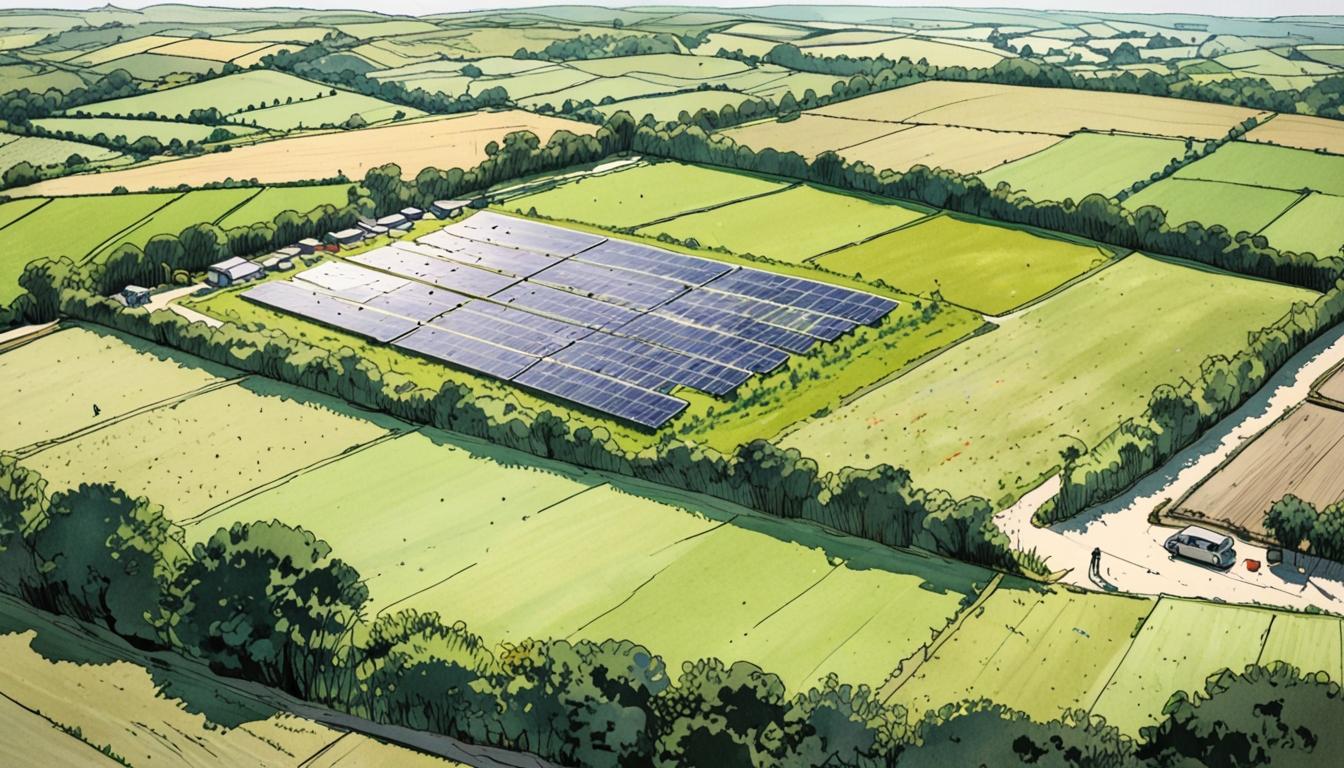
# Concerns raised over proposed solar farm in Denby, Derbyshire



Campaigners in the village of Denby, Derbyshire, have raised concerns over a proposed solar farm project that spans 155 acres of agricultural land. The initiative, developed by Starlight Energy, aims to generate electricity sufficient to power approximately 14,800 homes while displacing an estimated 15,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. However, the project, which has been submitted for approval to Amber Valley Borough Council, has drawn significant opposition due to its potential impact on the local environment and community.

The Save Denby Green Belt group organised a public meeting to discuss the plans following their submission to the council. The proposed site, located near Denby Village, Marehay, and the Denby Pottery site, has been described by Dave Moore, chair of the campaign group, as "stonkingly industrial". Speaking at the meeting, he remarked, “It will be there for 40 years… I won’t be here then,” indicating the long-term nature of the development, which he believes could overshadow a generation.

Residents expressed their unease regarding the ecological impact of the proposed solar farm, highlighting concerns that the area, known for its natural beauty and wildlife, would be transformed into “metal and glass seen from miles around”. Moore further noted, “We live in a beautiful part of the countryside, there are squirrels in my back garden that attest to that – the ecology issue is a problem.”

Traffic associated with the construction of the solar farm is another major point of contention. The project anticipates nearly 8,000 lorry trips over the construction period, which translates to an average of 165 trips per week. Attendees at the public meeting articulated fears regarding the potential disruption and noise caused by this heavy traffic, especially along roads that are already under strain.

Concerns were also raised about the noise impact of the project's electrical inverters, expected to produce sound levels between 18 and 34 decibels at the nearest homes, which the developer argues is quieter than the current background noise levels in the area. Residents, however, question the adequacy of these assessments and the potential for inconsistent noise in practice.

During the meeting, campaigners highlighted the plans for fencing along footpaths that would be significantly altered or enclosed, affecting access to approximately 3.5 miles of routes. Complaints about the risk of fire posed by battery storage facilities on-site were also noted.

Several local councillors attended the meeting, and their sentiments echoed those of the concerned residents. Councillor Julie Whitmore noted the apparent anger and distress among the community regarding the solar farm proposal, stating she would formally oppose it. Former borough councillor Matt Murray referred to the scheme as a “blot on the landscape for 40 years” and warned of additional applications for similar projects in the future. Councillor Lian Pizzey suggested that renewable energy initiatives should utilise industrial land, car parks, or rooftops rather than green fields.

Councillor Amanda Paget reinforced opposition to developments on Green Belt land, advocating for prioritising brownfield sites for such projects instead.

In response to concerns about land use, Starlight Energy outlined in its application a broad rationale for the solar farm, citing the low percentage of renewable energy capacity in Amber Valley—a mere five per cent compared to demand. The company referred to the Derbyshire Spatial Energy Study, which highlights Amber Valley’s high rates of carbon emissions, indicating a pressing need for additional renewable energy generation to meet local net-zero targets.

Despite requests for comment, Starlight Energy did not provide a statement on the community’s opposition or the points raised during the public meeting. The future of the proposed solar farm now rests in the hands of Amber Valley Borough Council, which will consider the concerns of local residents and stakeholders in its decision-making process.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.solarpowerportal.co.uk/solar_partnership_to_cut_costs_for_denby_pottery/> - This article provides context on solar projects in Derbyshire, mentioning Denby Pottery's transition to renewable energy, which shares similarities with the concerns over energy generation in the region.
2. <https://news.sky.com/story/life-would-never-be-the-same-again-the-tenant-farmers-targeted-by-solar-developers-13073003> - This article discusses the impact of solar farms on farmland and local communities, highlighting concerns similar to those raised in Denby, Derbyshire.
3. <https://www.solarpowerportal.co.uk/starlight_energy_submits_leicestershire_solar_planning_application/> - This article mentions Starlight Energy's involvement in solar projects, providing background on the company's activities in renewable energy development.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/derbyshire-spatial-energy-study> - This resource could provide insights into the energy needs and carbon emissions in Derbyshire, supporting Starlight Energy's rationale for the proposed solar farm.
5. <https://www.nao.org.uk/highlights/renewable-energy/> - This report from the National Audit Office provides insights into renewable energy development across the UK, including issues related to land use and community impact.
6. <https://www.nature.scot/climate-change/renewable-energy/solar> - This page discusses the integration of solar energy into natural landscapes, touching on the concerns about environmental impact and aesthetics raised by residents in Denby.
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